

The activity of the French in the Laos states and the Mekong valley is not unnatural,ly causing some excitement in Siam. The "Siam Herald" informs us that the Government of that country are taking steps to check what our contemporary terms the hostile movements of the French by the appointment of stations along the banks of the Mekong on both sides of the stream and the appointment of trustworthy commissioners at all the principal towns bordering the French boundary, the commissioners to have a force sufficiently imposing to assert their authority and repel trespassers over the border. The Siamese are wise in thus giving a tangible form to their sovereignty over the district in question if they really intend to dispute France's pretensions. The French contend that the Laos states are really dependencies of Annam, whose empire they say extends to the Mekong, and as protectors of Annam they now claim to exercise jurisdiction up to the boundary thus indicated. In the interests of peace it is to be hoped that both parties will prove amicable to reason, but, making mutual concessions where necessary, agree upon a clearly defined boundary as to which there shall be no cause for dispute in the future. If Siam's claims to the disputed territory are of a somewhat nebulous character those of France are no less so. The semi-independent states formerly paid tribute to Siam or Annam indifferently, whichever was able to exact it; and when they could withhold it with safety they paid it to neither. How the relative rights of Siam and Annam are to be determined by any strict rule of justice is, therefore, not easy to see. Siam has apparently resolved to support her claim by actual occupation, and this is eminently a case in which possession must be deemed nine points of the law. It is unlikely that France would attempt to dislodge the Siamese posts by force of arms, for the rebels and pirates provide sufficient occupation for the present Tonkin garrison and the Government in Paris would be indisposed, after M. Ferry's experience in connection with the Tonkin expedition, to sanction another enterprise of a like character. The French taxpayer is not impressed with the value of the Mekong valley and would not willingly go to any expense to acquire it. Siam, therefore, if she acts prudently, has the best of the position. She has only to substantiate her claim to sovereignty or co-sovereignty in the disputed territory by exercising effective control of her territory on actual occupation, and the chances of her being disturbed are remote.

Siam, however, if she wishes to preserve her integrity will have to adopt a progressive policy, and endeavour, like Japan, to bring herself more into line with nineteenth century civilization. This, we are pleased to observe, she is doing. Attention is being paid to education, reforms are being introduced in the administration, attention is being given to the development of the resources of the country, and the work of railway construction has been entered upon. The King is an enlightened monarch and is assisted by able Ministers, the nobles and people appear favourably disposed to a policy of progress, and there is every reason to believe the country has before it a happy and prosperous future. It is important, however, with France pressing on her eastern and northern borders, that she should as far as possible remove all cause of Siam's quarrel by taking up a clearly defined position with regard to her boundary line. In the absence of effective occupation claims to sovereignty over any particular territory are in these days treated with scant respect, and are calculated to lead to trouble. Spain almost lost the Caroline Islands a few years ago owing to the want of effective occupation, in the absence of which the German flag was hoisted, and in the negotiations that followed it was well established as a point of international law that there must be something more than mere declaration to make good a title to possession. The case of the Laos states is somewhat analogous to that of the Caroline Islands, both Siam and France, the latter as the protector of Annam, lays claim to them, though neither is at present in a position to produce much evidence in the shape of actual control in support of its claim. Siam has apparently recognised the importance of this point, and, as if our Bangkok contemporary is correct, has by the appointment of commissioners who are to be supported by a sufficient force to compel respect. The step is a wise one, for the longer the dispute with France is allowed to simmer the more difficult will be the ultimate settlement.

the foreigners who remained in Formosa during the period of the blockade and earned their very sincere thanks, which were expressed in a formal address. From this we may make the following extract:—"We fully appreciate the friendly spirit and the conscientious resolve to discharge every duty which have led him, while under the weight of cares and responsibilities which we can hardly realise, to give a thought to the hardship of foreigners whose gallantry have kept them in Formosa; to issue such comprehensive and oft-repeated instructions and to adopt such effective precautionary measures that we have met with only kindness and civility from soldiers and people; our property has been as safe as in the most undisturbed times; and we have experienced none of those evils which might have been feared at the hands of an ignorant people, exasperated by enforced illness and consequent poverty, and by seeing their trade stopped, their vessels and goods destroyed, and so many of their neighbours and countrymen killed or carried away to captivity by a foreign enemy." Now that the recipient of this address is about to retire, and when the cordiality of 1895 has been somewhat dissipated by subsequent friction, it is only fair to recall the estimation in which he was held at that critical time.

The war having been concluded the Military Commissioner was appointed Governor, the island being then constituted a separate province and placed under the jurisdiction of the Viceroy of Peking. Liu was thus given a free hand and he at once entered on a "progressive policy," introducing improvements which made more real than discretion. His comrade Taipei-fu his capital, had the electric light put in his yamen, while carriage roads made, sent to England for steamers which he did not know what to do with when they arrived, and as about the construction of a railway to Kelung. For the latter he got competent engineers from England, but put ignorant Chinese officials over them who insisted on interfering in technical details of which they knew nothing. One engineer after another was engaged and discharged, or resigned, and with the frequent changes and the unsystematic methods of the native officials the line has turned out, as might be expected under the circumstances, expensive and defective in construction. The Governor's intentions were in every way laudable, but he lacked the business capacity to carry out his improvements on a profitable basis. Things went merely for a time until money began to get scarce, and then it became necessary to turn the screw on the unfortunate pensioners. While the improvements were confined almost exclusively to the North, it is in the South that the pressure of taxation has been most felt, and discontent has been raised to a high pitch. To the affairs of the South the Governor appears to have given little personal attention, but to have left them to a set of rapacious officials who have done their best to make hay while the sun shone. The unfortunate old gentleman also allowed himself to be cajoled into a renewal of the camphor monopoly, against the treaties and agreements with foreign powers, and at the same time the Kelung coal mines, which properly managed should have proved a source of immense wealth, have been allowed to remain comparatively unproductive. On the whole Liu Min-shan appears to have been almost as great a failure as an administrator as he was a success as a soldier, and his retirement from the Government cannot be regarded with regret, though sympathy will be felt for him on account of the ill-health which led to his application to be relieved.

THE SINGAPORE PRESS ON HONG-KONG AFFAIRS.

The differences which arose between Sir WILLIAM DES VŒUX and the official members of Council have attracted considerable attention at Singapore, both the local papers treating the subject editorially. The *Strait Times* approaches it in a judicial spirit and says the general opinion at Singapore is "that the trouble is one which might have been avoided with a little tact; but probably the Governor was suffering from the irritation which accompanies illness, and "probably the unofficials were annoyed at the whole question of the Military Contingent; and that neither side was right. "It seems rather hard," our contemporary goes on to say, "because of the Military Contingent and other such matters, to attempt to take back the rise in salaries which was voted to the Colony's Civil Servants. On the other hand, it is generally agreed that when the whole of the unofficial members of a Colony desire an urgent telegram on a financial subject to be forwarded to the Secretary of State, the Government ought not to refuse the request, unless for the gravest reasons of State. His remedy, if he disapproves the telegram, is to attach to it his own rider expressing disapproval, and to let both go before the authorities at home. Taking another point, it is not considered here (Singapore) that Sir WILLIAM DES VŒUX acted in a dignified fashion in calling the unofficial members to his house, and lecturing them upon their demerit towards him. The Governor of a Colony ought to be too considerate a person to engage in such a proceeding; and it is assumed that not only Sir WILLIAM DES VŒUX would not have engaged in it but for the irritation and disturbances of facilities which naturally accompany a severe illness. The whole matter is at once rather small and rather painful." The general opinion at Singapore, if it is rightly interpreted by our contemporary, coincides very closely with the general opinion at Hongkong. The *Singapore Free Press* adopts a different tone

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are having the most changeful weather,
and the wind quite warm, and the mxt to look
clear. The rain is regular, and the
thermometer showed only 7 or 8 degrees above zero,
and the wind was blowing freshly from the
N. To-day a north wind makes the temper-
ature pleasant. Our Consul (Mr. Watson)
is going for his summer, with his family
for Canton, to replace Mr. C. A. Ala-
n (who no doubt is anxious to have be-
come not wather seas in. Large quantities
of goods arrive daily from the interior, and
the business has been one of the best ports
to considerable, and there is every appear-
ance of the Customs returns being quite as
valuable as in better even than last year. In
the port is prosperous, and if railways are
built, the commerce will be greatly increased
in the future.—Daily News correspondent.

to regret to have to announce the death of
J. H. Bligham, chief engineer of the *U. S. Albatross*, which was wrecked on the U. S. coast on Monday morning last, from the effects of a attack of pneumonia. The *Albatross* was from Cuba, and was wrecked and put in harm on Sunday last in consequence of a serious case of Mr. Bligham's illness, which, who was about fifty years of age, was in the last stage at the time of the preliminary part of the funeral service which was held in the Catholic Cathedral. The service was believed to have been held at A. Ostropoff, I. R. N., Captain of the steamer "Volunteer Fleet" steamer *Westchester*, which took U. S. H. the *Centurion* and the *Albatross* back to New York, and was in the Navy, and has been appointed to take command of the "Volunteer Fleet" steamer *Albatross*, upon her arrival in Westchester, next day.

It is reported that Mr. V. Kestell is shortly expected here to resume the position of Consul General, in succession to Mr. W. H. Wallcut, a regret to hear from Capt. Hook, of the *Albatross* steamer *Nordica*, that upon his recent return from the Westchester, he had the pleasure whatever was discovered of the missing

TOKYO.

After the wreck of the Turkish frigate *Ertok*, a collection was made by the *Jiji Shimbun* of half of the families of the men who had lost their lives in the ship and of the survivors, and money—amounting to 18,907.04 francs—was sent to Turkey by Mr. Noda Shizuko, a representative of that journal. This benevolent has been acknowledged by his Excellency Ispahan, Turkish Minister of Foreign Affairs, by Tetsar Pascha, President of the Relief Committee. Japanese versions of the letters are published by the *Jiji Shimbun*.

by the *Jips Shippo* with reference to the connection between the market prices of the lowest grade of brown sugar and the quality of the crop of grain. A plentiful barley harvest, we are told, means a high rate for sugar and vice versa. The reason assigned is that, when the harvest is good, the price of grain is low, and they have to buy a great deal of sugar, whereas, when the harvest is bad, the price of grain is high, and they have to buy a great deal of sugar. The *Jips Shippo* also states that, when the price of grain is high, the price of sugar is low, and when the price of grain is low, the price of sugar is high. This is a very curious statement, and it is not clear how it can be true. It is possible that the *Jips Shippo* is referring to the price of sugar in terms of the price of grain, and that the price of sugar is high when the price of grain is low, and vice versa. This would be a reasonable statement, and it is possible that the *Jips Shippo* is correct. However, it is not clear how this can be true, and it is not clear how it can be false. It is possible that the *Jips Shippo* is referring to the price of sugar in terms of the price of grain, and that the price of sugar is high when the price of grain is low, and vice versa. This would be a reasonable statement, and it is possible that the *Jips Shippo* is correct. However, it is not clear how this can be true, and it is not clear how it can be false. It is possible that the *Jips Shippo* is referring to the price of sugar in terms of the price of grain, and that the price of sugar is high when the price of grain is low, and vice versa. This would be a reasonable statement, and it is possible that the *Jips Shippo* is correct. However, it is not clear how this can be true, and it is not clear how it can be false.

	Value of goods exported from Japan, Yen.	Value of goods imported into Japan, Yen.	Total, Yen.
England	10,931,437	2,201,102	13,132,539
France	2,969,435	4,593,112	7,562,547
Hongkong	1,848,253	1,848,253	3,696,506
China	8,354,393	3,503,911	11,858,304
India	1,041,253	1,041,253	2,082,506
Philippines	816,981	3,925,955	4,742,936
Manila	1,250,718	3,305,549	4,556,267
Japan	1,041,253	1,041,253	2,082,506
Peru	61,020	1,938,266	1,999,286
Latin America	1,622,214	5,626,255	7,248,469

YOKOHAMA.

The so-called "reforms" in the Nippon Yusen Kaisha have been the subject of many newspaper articles of rather sweeping character. In addition to the position of Managers of Departments of the company, the reforms have also affected the employees. The Yokohama office has received an intima-

certain date. The changes, our contemporary believes, were made without any forecasting, and were made almost casually. The first was the sleek *Tokachi Maru*, from Vladivostok to Kuba, went on shore, in a fog at Tsuruhashi, Tsushima, about 5 o'clock on the morning of the 11th inst. Passengers, crew, and mail were to be brought on by the company's steamer *Tsuruga Maru*. A special to the *Japan Mail* stated: "The *Tokachi* has sunk full of cargo, but no lives have been lost." The Gazette says: "We do not doubt when the full details are known, no blame will be

the most famous. During twenty years' command on the coast, until the present unfortunate accident, he has kept clear of casualties of all kinds. His popularity as a commander is unbounded, and last year on completing his fiftieth voyage to Vladivostok, he received a flattering testimonial from the residents of that port. Such are the uncertainties and the vicissitudes of life that even the smartest commanders are liable to be overtaken by a calamity of this kind. It was not until the day after yesterday that he encountered by Captain Walker. His numerous friends will deeply sympathize with him in his misfortune.

observed under most favorable circumstances in Japan on the 10th inst. The fact that no satisfactory observation of the transit of Mercury across the sun's disc has ever been made in Japan stimulated astronomers to special exertions in the way of photographic preparations. According to to-day's papers, *who the Japanese* *Jessette* (of the 11th inst.) those who were appointed to take observations of the transit of Mercury were too excited to sleep on Saturday night, and the morning broke with nothing obscuring the sun and his light, the mist which so often ushers in

ing to the calculations of astronomers, the ingress should have begun at 8h. 57m. 21s, but yesterday's observations show that it commenced at 8h. 50m. It first assumed the form of a triangle, and the usual 'drop' was distinctly visible till the planet disappeared near the centre of the sun's disc, after which it was not seen till the ingress was approached. The egress took place at 1h. 50m. The total number of photographs taken at the Astronomical Observatory was 30. About 50 persons belonging to various learned Societies attended the Observatory for the sake of witnessing the phenomenon.

BANGKOK.

A Bangkok-based, forcible escape, on the 2nd inst. As the 1st instom in the gaol enclosure, says the *Bangkok Times*, the short-time prisoners were parading in the square after supper and preparatory to being locked up for the night. On filing past the inner gate of the main entrance, the rear part of the line precariously broke away and, with the implements of their daily avocation in hand and some exact which they had possessed themselves, made a furious attack on the wooden gates and the guards stationed over them; and quickly demolishing the gates, put on their heels and fled.

Several of the wardens were badly cut with the axes which the convicts wielded, and Mr. Allen, the European warden, received severe wounds on the hand. The whole of the gail officials, from the governor to the wardens, were by this time on the alert, and a large body, aided by police, immediately started in pursuit of the fugitives. Several were overtaken and secured near the bridge spanning Kioke-taphan-hi, captured the first two of the convicts, and, unfortunately, received injuries from their desperate resistance. Ultimately all but one of the run-aways were secured!

LIPPING IN POST.

Wh. str. 9, 2, Cummings, May 15,
at 7 and 34
Wh. bark 74, Cribben, April 20,
at 10
Wh. str. 1, 113, Lantigua, April 30,
on Martins

NACASO KL.

Port on 6th May, 1891.

Wh. str. 2, 70, Tomashofsky, May 2,
at 10
Wh. str. 855, Elden, May 10,
at 11
Wh. str. 679, Josselson, May 3

REG. 100—CHRISTENSEN, WINGPO

Wh. str. 1, 124, R. Pander,
at 10
Wh. str. 1, 130, Shaw, May 4,
at 10
Wh. str. 351, Swanson, Oct. 26,
at 10
Wh. str. 130, Parsons, May 5,
at 10

KORE.

Wh. str. 1, 114, May, 1891.

[illegible]

A. v. s., 1,278, Wallis, Apr. 10,
Lading Co.
A. v. s., 1,492, A. Tyson, May 9,
Trading Co.
A. v. s., 1,314, N. van May 9,
& Sons
A. v. s., 1,957, Shaw, Mar. 11,
Lading Co.
A. v. s., 1,678, W. Smith, May 12,
N. B.
A. v. s., 2,709, G. Roy, May 11,
Barnhill & Co.

BAUKROK

Port 6th May, 1891.
A. v. s., 381, April 24, Clarke &
Co. burt, 215, Berant Nov. 3,
Siam, 653, LeCia, Nov. 3,
Berant, 591,
L. M. Ward & Co.
Berant, 1,075, Mercier, Mar. 23,
Company

[illegible]

Nagasaki.
6 gms., Liout.-Oami Ingeam;
at Sagarbo
torpedo cruiser. 6-guns, 3,590
J. L. Barr; at Hongkong
cruiser. 8 gms., 1,300 h.p.,
Haupt; at Surakakin
at Sagarbo
Liout.-Oami Ingeam;
12 gms., 8,000 h.p., Capt. W.
mining launch; at Hongkong
cruiser e.v.t., 2 guns, 1,010 h.p.,
R. Bapham; at Amoy
e.v.t.; in reserve, 3 guns, 340 hp,
in reserve, 3 guns, 340 hp,
corvette, 18 guns, 1,000 h.p.,
J. Churchill; at Honkoko
ironclad; 4, 1,450, in reserve, at

MEMORANDUM OF WAR ON THE
NAGASAKI STATION.

blow. Russian cruiser, Capt. ...
 at Nagasaki
 off, Russian cruiser, 30 guns,
 at Hongkong
 Russian cruiser, Capt. Jougoueres,
 at Nagasaki
 Comd. H. O. Taylor,
 gunboat, 4 guns, Capt. Journef,
 at
 Russian cruiser, 13 guns, 1,160 h.p.,
 at Nagasaki
 h gunboat, Lieut. Martel, at
 a corvette, Capt. Nibhoff, at
 gunboat, 4 guns, 4,340 h.p., Capt.
 Ningpo
 h gunboat, Capt. Jougoueres,
 at
 Russian gunboat, Capt. Filloff, at
 Russian corvette, 6 guns, 1,385 h.p.,
 at Hongkong
 Russian cruiser, Captain Rallager,
 at
 Com. Noony, at Bangkok

gun-boat, 7 guns. Comdr. Masi,
Yokohama.
gun-vessel, 8 guns. Com. K. L.
Yokohama
sian cruiser, 9 guns, 253 h.p.,
at Yhirostock
boat, 5 guns, 500 h.p., Lieut.
Hawthorn, at Hongkong
Russian cruiser, Capt. Loman,
h cruiser, Capt. Fareast, at
bt, Capt. Tapal, at Hongkong
Spanish cruiser, Capt. Inglisla,
gun-boat, 3 guns,
Santa Barbara, at Mexico
a cruiser, 16 guns, Capt. Surlet
cruiser, Captain Meribia, at
corvette, Com. P. H. Cooper,
French frigate, Capt. Crouzier
Chagrin
russian cruiser, Captain Vaisson, at
boat, 4 guns, 100 h.p., Capt.

Sailor
 ship, Russian cruiser, Captain
 at Hongkong
 cruiser, Comd. Rojch, at
 St., 3 guns, Com. Molobousky,
 boat, 2 guns, S40 h.p., Lieut.
 at Kertass
 corvette, 4 guns, Cap. Khil-
 ong

Edited by D. WARREN SMITH
 in Street, Victoria; Hongkong.